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# NATIONALISM.

A FRAGMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE.

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*The National Polity is the normal type of Modern Government; Civil Liberty resting on Institutional Self-Government is the high political calling of this period; Absolutism, whether Monarchical or Democratic, intelligent and brilliant or coarse, its pervading danger; and increasing International Neighbourliness with growing Agreement of National Forms and Concepts, its fairest Gage of the Spreading Progress of our Kind.*

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## *Normal Types of Government. Nationalization.*

As the city-state was the normal type of free communities in antiquity, and as the feudal system must be considered as one of the normal types of government in the forbidding middle ages, so is the national polity the normal type of our own epoch—not indeed centralism.

The highest national polity yet developed is the representative national government, equally distant from the market-republic of old and the despotism of Asia and Europe, or absorbing centralism. Centralism may be intensely national, even bigottedly so; it may be intelligent, and formulated with precision; but centralism remains an inferior species of government, and decentralization becomes necessary as self-government or liberty are longed for and present themselves clearer to the mind of a people waxing in manliness and independence. Centralism may be national, but National Polity and Centralism are not equivalent terms. England, which has enjoyed a national polity long before other European countries, is to this day the least centralized state of Europe, and possesses a far higher degree of self-government than any people of the neighbouring continent. Germany, although the Germans were called the German Nation in the early times of the emperors, never acquired a national polity, like the English, which dates from the days of Alfred, and is openly and liberally marked out by Magna Charta. There was an England with unbarred national intercommunication long before there was a national France, Spain, or Italy, or a political, national Germany.

Large nations were gradually formed out of the fragmentary peoples on the continent of Europe, long after the disintegration of the Roman empire, by different processes of nationalization, which form one of the most instructive subjects in the whole history of civilization; England alone dating the blessing of a national polity from over a thousand years back. Other nations are even now in the act of forming; others, already existing, are carrying out more distinctly or establishing more firmly the national elements of their



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polities. For this reason, and because the existence of many nations deeply influences our civilization, the present period will be called the National Period. It began plainly when so many other great things began, when great events happened and great ideas burst upon mankind, and when inventions and discoveries were made, which ushered in the modern era—in the middle of the fifteenth century; that age when the conquering Mussulman tore the fairest portion from Europe, and thereby forced the restoration of letters and revival of inquiry upon her; when Europe lost Greece in the East, and sent Columbus to the west to discover our continent. The process of nationalizing the many dialects and jargons had begun in some countries—geographically marked as countries, but wholly un-nationalized otherwise—at an earlier time. Dante, singing in the Tuscan dialect, raised it thus to the dignity of the language for all Italy, as Luther by his own translation of the Bible, made his dialect the German language; and Dante, the greatest poet of his country, which he calls *Italia mia di dolor ostello* (the very inn of grief,) because torn to pieces and lacking her destined nationality, became thus the first nationalizer of Italy in the thirteenth and at the beginning of the fourteenth century—four hundred and fifty years before Cavour; and now only has Germany made a vigorous movement toward her political nationalization, in which may Heaven bless her leaders' boldest acts.

*What is a Nation in the Modern Sense of the Word?*

The word Nation, in the fullest adaptation of the term, means, in modern times, a numerous and homogeneous population, (having long emerged from the hunter's and nomadic state,) permanently inhabiting and cultivating a coherent territory, with a well defined geographic outline, and a name of its own—the inhabitants speaking their own language having their own literature and common institutions, which distinguish them clearly from other and similar groups of people; being citizens or subjects of a unitary government, however subdivided it may be, and feeling an organic unity with one another, as well as being conscious of a common destiny. Organic intellectual, and political, internal unity, with proportionate strength, and a distinct and obvious demarcation from similar groups, are notable elements of the idea of a modern nation in its fullest sense. A nation is a nation only when there is but one nationality; and the attempt at establishing a nationality within a nationality is more inconsistent and mischievous even than the establishment of "an empire within an empire."

No groupings of human beings, short of nations, are adequate to the high demands of modern civilization. Without a national character, states cannot obtain that longevity and continuity of political society which is necessary for our progress. Even our patriotism has become pre-eminently national. Modern patriotism is not satisfied with the narrow bounds of a city, as of old, or the limits of a province, though it be the fairest. Nothing but a Country, that is the dwelling-place of a nation, suffices for the *patria* of modern men. But were not the noblest sentiments, and deeds, and victories, even of Greece, of a Pan-Hellenic character?

In the organic unity lies the difference between the terms *Nation* and *People*.



People generally means the aggregate of the inhabitants of a territory, without any additional idea, at least favourable idea. In all European languages, except the English, the words corresponding to People had acquired the meaning of rabble, populace, the lowest and least respectable class. The French Dictionary of the Academy gave hardly another definition of the word *Peuple*; and in England alone, to her great honour, did it retain, or at any rate acquire at a very early period, an honourable meaning. While the French Academy thus ignominiously defined the word People, Chatham, when George III. had reluctantly appointed him premier, used to be called the People's Minister for "His Majesty's Secretary of State," and on the other hand, it was natural that Louis XV. was startled when first the word Nation came to be heard in the last century, in France. He is reported to have said: "Nation! What is Nation? Is there anything besides myself?" The remark seems to be too profound for a being such as he had sunk to be; but there can be no doubt that this supposed question indicated the sentiment of that portion of the French court which was led by the Jesuits, then as under the Spanish predominance, and as now, hostile to national organic unity and to nationalism in its varied manifestations.

Extensive and organized power over large populations does not suffice to make a nation. The Roman monarchy was no national empire; nor had the vast dominion of Charles the Fifth a national character. Prussia, ever since the Peace of Paris, in 1815, called one of the Five Great Powers, never formed a nation. She herself acknowledged, and still acknowledges, that the nation to which she belongs is the German nation, though not yet politically nationalized, as Martin Luther had called it in 1520, in his grand and inspiring letter "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation on the Bettering of the Ghostly Class" (Clergy). Nor does common extraction and demarcating institutions, not even a peculiar religion, necessarily constitute a nation in the modern sense. The modern Jews dispersed over the globe have never consolidated into a nation. Nor does a common language alone constitute a nation. If Panslavism were ever so successful, there would be no Panslavic nation; nor can we properly speak, at present, of a Russian nation, however distinct the Russian empire may be. The Russian system has rather the tendency to trample out nationalities and national characteristics for the benefit of a gigantic bureaucracy, called Russia.

However striking a characteristic of a nation may be found in a separate language, and however important a separate name for a country or a nation may be, neither is absolutely necessary. We are an illustration. We have not our separate language; and more than two distinctly separate nations may speak the English tongue, before the Cis-Caucasian race passes into the twentieth century. Long before the American Independence was actually declared the consciousness of our forming a national entirety was ripening. The Continental Congress used the words Country and America in its official acts—in resolutions and appointments—before that day of mark, the Fourth of July. The very name Continental Congress, continental army and money shows that the idea of a national unity was present to the minds of all—at home as well as abroad. Unfortunately no name had formed itself for our portion of the globe. No one can say in what bed our history would

have coursed, had there been a distinct name for our country, and had Philadelphia become the national capital. As it was, general names came to be used. Chatham and his contemporaries always used the name America; Washington was appointed to the command in order to defend and protect "American liberty," before the Declaration of Independence; but whether there was a distinct name or not, all felt that we were a nation. John Adams ascribes to the speech of Otis against the Writs of Assistance, therefore before the outbreak of the Revolution, the power of having "breathed into this nation the breath of life," and when Doctor Franklin, with Deane and Lee, were received as Ministers of the United States of America by the king of France on March 19th. 1778, after the conclusion of the treaty between the two governments, the king spoke to Franklin of "the two nations."

The pre-revolutionary speeches, specimens of which are given in a modest but very instructive school book, ("Patriotic Eloquence," by the late Mrs. Kirkland,) show that the leading men of America had at that early period no other idea than that of a country, of our land; and that of a nation, of our people. The puny provincialism which unfolded itself under the insufficient Articles of Confederation. came into vogue after the heroic period of the Revolution, and it led the country to the very brink of ruin and extinction. So at least Washington and other men of the period thought and wrote and spoke, and they knew their country well.

The nationality of our people and their government used to be strenuously denied by the adherents of what was called the State-Rights doctrine; probably it is still; not however because we have not our own language, nor, unfortunately, a distinct name for our country (not quite unlike the deficiency of the English language itself in not possessing a word for *Patrie* or *Vaterland*), but because they preferred provincialism to nationalism, and clung to the effete form of government of a confederacy of petty sovereignties. They denied even that Congress was a government.

In antiquity and the early middle ages there existed no nations in the modern sense, this side of China, with the only exception of the Israelites. There were Assyrian and Median and Persian empires, but not nations. The empires were called after the conquering and ruling tribe or race. Hence their sudden conquests and speedy annihilation.

Moses would have established permanently the Israelites as different but very closely related tribes wrought into a national sacerdotal government; but the inaptitude for political development and organic congregation which seems to be common to the whole Semitic family, led the Israelites to disruption and secession long before their national government had fully developed itself. The history of the Hebrews is a sickening account of national suicide and humiliation.

The prescribed destiny of the Hebrews was to guard, in spite of their pagan pruriency, the idea of one God, Creator and Sustainer of all things and beings, through centuries of alluring, sensuous and, often æsthetic polytheism around them. Political nationality was subordinate with them; yet the fact ought to arrest our grave attention that the only monotheistic people, and the people for whom Moses legislated, formed a nation, in the modern sense, in the earliest times.

*Political Characteristics of our Age.*

The three main characteristics of the political development which mark the modern epoch are :

The national polity ;

The general endeavour to define more clearly, and to extend more widely, human rights and civil liberty ; (not unconnected as this movement is with the pervading critical spirit of the age, and the wedlock of Knowledge and Labour, which marks the nineteenth century ;)

And the decree which has gone forth that many leading nations shall flourish at one and the same time, plainly distinguished from one another, yet striving together, with one public opinion, under the protection of one law of nations, and in the bonds of one common moving civilization.

The universal monarchy, whether purely political, as that of the Romans was, or that attempted again by Napoleon I. ; or whether coupled with the papacy, as cruelly attempted by Charles V., and especially by Philip II., under whom the war cry was : "One Pope and One King ;" a single leading nation ; confederacies of petty sovereigns ; a civilization confined to one spot or portion of the globe—all these are obsolete ideas, wholly insufficient for the demands of advanced civilization, and attempts at their renewal have led and must lead to ruinous results, the end of all anachronisms recklessly pursued.

Even the course which civilization has steadily taken for thousands of years, from the southeast to the northwest, has ceased in our times. It now spreads for the first time in all directions, and bends its way back to the Orient. The old historic belt between 30° and 50° northern latitude, within which the great current of events has flown, shall confine history no more.

*Inter-Dependence of Individuals and Nations. The Commonwealth of Nations.*

The multiplicity of civilized nations, their distinct independence (without which there would be enslaving Universal Monarchy), and their increasing resemblance and agreement, are some of the great safeguards of our civilization. Modern nations of our family have come to agree in much, and the agreement is growing. We have one alphabet, one system of numeration, one mathematical language, one music and the same fine arts, one system of education, high and low, one science, one division of government, one domestic economy, one dress and fashion and the same manners ; we have an extending agreement in measures, weights, coinage, and signals at sea, and one financial conception, so that all merchants' exchanges have become meetings of international import, at least of equal effect with that of international diplomacy.

Formerly the process of nationalization was appearing as one of the novel things ; now the process of inter-nationalization is going on ; and yet there will be no obliteration of nationalities. If such were the case, civilization would be seriously injured. Civilization always dwelled pre eminently in

ancient times with one people, and one government always swayed and led. Hence the simplicity of chronologic tables presenting the events of that time; and all ancient states were short-lived. Once declining, they never recovered. Their course was that of the projectile: ascending, a maximum, a precipitate descent, and no more rising. Modern nations are long-lived, and possess recuperative energy wholly unknown to antiquity. They could neither be the one nor possess the other without national existence and comprehensive politics, and without the law of nations, in its modern and elevated sense, in which it is at once the manly idea of self-government applied to a number of independent nations in close relation with one another, and the application of the fundamental law of Good Neighbourhood, and the comprehensive law of Nuisance, flowing from it, to vast national societies, wholly independent, sovereign, yet bound together by a thousand ties.

The all-pervading law of inter-dependence, without which men would never have felt compelled to form society, beyond the narrowest family ties—and it is even one of the elementary principles of the family—inter-dependence which like all original principles or characteristics of humanity, increases in intensity and spreads in action as men advance,—this divine law of inter-dependence applies to nations quite as much as to individuals.

The individual division of labour is no more impelled by it, than the production by territorial and climatic division of labour is quickened by the mutual dependence of the dwellers on the earth. This propitious and civilizing inter-dependence among nations is becoming daily more freely and willingly acknowledged, and the wise saying, *Ubi Societas ibi Jus*, finds constantly increasing application to entire nations. The civilized nations have come to constitute a community, and are daily forming more and more a commonwealth of nations, under the restraint and protection of the law of nations, which has begun to make its way even to countries not belonging to the Christian community, to which the Law of Nations had been confined. Our Wheaton's Law of Nations has been translated into Chinese, and is distributed by the government of that empire among its high officials. Soon it will form a subject of the Chinese higher state examination. The leading nations—the French, the English, the Germans, the Americans,—they draw the chariot of civilization abreast, as the ancient steeds drew the car of victory. and these pages are writing at the time when the imperial chancellor of the German Union has been directed by the Union's parliament to propose to all nations the perfect security of private property on the high seas during war, even though belonging to an enemy; and when a citizen of the American Republic has entered our city, at the head of a high Chinese embassy, sent to the great Western Powers in America and Europe, for the avowed purpose of attaching China to that Union of Nations among whom the Law of Nations has its sway in peace and in war.